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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003834

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PM AND AMBASSADOR DISCUSS SPD, UNSCR, PKK, CLC,
AMNESTY; AMB ENCOURAGES IRAQI PARTICIPATION AT ANNAPOLIS
CONFERENCE

REF: BAGHDAD 03772

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Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a wide-ranging, hour-long meeting November 22, Ambassador Crocker and PM Nouri al-Maliki discussed progress on the Security Partnership Declaration (SPD), foreseeing its signing on Monday, November 26; moving quickly on a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) for 2008; possible Turkish action against the PKK; next steps with Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups; and provisions of an Amnesty (reftel). End Summary.

Members of Congress visiting

¶2. (C) Ambassador opened the meeting by explaining that MNF-I CG David Petraeus was unable to attend due to his need to meet with visiting U.S. Congressional delegations. Maliki expressed his interest in also meeting with Senators McCain, Lieberman, Graham, and with Representative Murtha. The Ambassador assured him that their respective staffs were working the schedules to make room for a meeting if possible.

SPD Soon

¶3. (S) Ambassador told Maliki that the SPD was just about concluded and he hoped to arrange the signing soon. Maliki rejoined that they were still socializing the Declaration to the Council of Representatives (COR), quickly adding that the COR must be informed, but its approval is not needed for signing - it is a cabinet decision. He foresaw a signing on Monday, November 26. Ambassador agreed that the greater the consensus supporting the SPD the better it would be, but it must be finished soon to move onto the next matter at hand - the UNSCR.

UNSCR

¶4. (S) Maliki noted that agreement on the SPD would ease adoption of a new UNSCR. Ambassador agreed, but reiterated the importance of quick action - with the Hajj and Christmas holidays looming, there was not much time to get the UNSCR text agreed and passed. Maliki took the point.

Annapolis conference

15. (C) Ambassador encouraged Maliki to send a representative to the Annapolis Arab-Israeli Conference, noting that it would be most useful for Iraq to show itself playing a role in the wider region. Maliki demurred, responding that Iraq had so many internal problems to face, it would be difficult to get involved in larger issues in a profitable way. Ambassador pressed Maliki not to leave empty their seat at the table, noting that resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would certainly have benefits beyond Israel and Palestine. He suggested that the Iraqi Ambassador in Washington could certainly travel to Annapolis so Iraq's place was not empty. Maliki promised to consider it and asked if Syria would be present. Ambassador assured him that Syria had been invited, as had all members of the Arab League (AL) and the AL itself. Maliki took note of this but did not make a commitment.

PKK/Turkey

16. (S) Ambassador informed Maliki that the Government of Turkey was likely still considering military action against PKK elements in Iraq. Although the GOT has toned down the rhetoric, a clear indication that it has taken note of and appreciated GOI and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) actions against the PKK, there remained a good chance that the GOT would conduct military operations against the PKK. Maliki asked for a clarification of what Ambassador expected to happen. Ambassador outlined the U.S. messages to the GOT that any military action should be directed against armed PKK targets. Ambassador added that the KRG delegation to Ankara (led by Kurdish Islamic Union Secretary General Salahdin Bayadin) had been

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well received and they had good talks. Responding to Maliki's concern the group had only staff-level talks, Ambassador noted that the delegation had met with PM Erdogan's Foreign Policy Advisor, Ahmed Davutoglu. He reminded Maliki that this issue was not resolved and the GOI must continue to work the issue - PM leadership, as at Istanbul, would be crucial, he stressed.

17. (S) In response, Maliki expressed concern that Iraq was being sidelined by the GOT rejection of trilateral talks in favor of bilateral talks with the United States. Ambassador assured him that we support trilateral dissuasions, noting that the GOT was likely hesitant, given its bad experience with past trilateral efforts. Maliki agreed it was important to continue efforts for trilateral discussions and that, for the time being, bilateral U.S.-Iraq and U.S.-Turkey talks would have to suffice. He raised the importance of having the GOT accept the role of the KRG in future talks. Ambassador concluded by agreeing with Maliki and advising him that as the GOT sees positive efforts from the KRG, as the US has, it will resist less the KRG's inclusion in talks. Maliki took the point, but noted that the GOT did not trust Masoud Barzani - but the Iraqi Kurds must do their best.

Security Improving, but...

18. (C) On security issues, Ambassador advised Maliki that much progress had been made, but the fight is not over - we will continue pressure on those who oppose you and us. We must be careful, for we have not reached the point of final victory, he added. One concern is that elements of Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) are ready to reject Mogtadah al-Sadr's directives to not attack Coalition Forces. Recent

gains give the U.S. an opportunity, he noted, and it was important to keep the focus on the common enemy. In this vein, it was important that FMS program funds be transferred for use by the MOI. Maliki agreed with all the Ambassador said but indicated the FMS funds transfer to MOI would not take place. He added that there was internal dissension in the JAM, with some of its personnel, "moderates" according to Maliki, interested in pushing out the Special Groups forces. Maliki expressed strong confidence in the ability of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to go after the JAM Special Forces elements. He then expressed continuing concern about Al Qaeda. Maliki concluded that Baghdad must be secured - "a country is judged on its capital," he said.

MOSUL/CLCs

¶9. (C) Maliki raised the issue of Mosul, linking his concerns with some of the members of CLCs to the need for stability and security in Mosul. He questioned the need for CLCs in Mosul, opining that it would upset the KRG and that some, though not all, of CLC members were just in it for money or other negative reasons. He made it clear that he considers Mosul a predominantly Arab town that needs an Arab security operations commander assisted by Kurdish and Turkomen officers. He declared that success in Mosul against the gangs, foreign terrorist, and armed groups there would be "our declaration of victory." He knew that the KRG would not be happy with an ethnic-Arab commander there, but he would remind the commander to be non-sectarian and include Kurdish and Turkomen officers. He stressed the importance of using lessons learned elsewhere to pursue security in Mosul. Ambassador reminded Maliki of MNF-I offer to brief him on situation there, which would allow for strategic discussion on the way forward in Mosul.

Amnesty

¶10. (C) Maliki explained that the Amnesty committee was looking at an amnesty for those in detention as well as some who are not but for whom a warrant had been issued. He said that he wanted to include as many as possible, but not murderers. There were also some constitutional issues to be sorted out. That said, the judiciary might decide on its own to release many detainees for lack of evidence. He asked that Ambassador discuss with MNF-I CG an amnesty for many of its detainees. Ambassador

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replied that someone from MNF-I should be included in the work of Maliki's Amnesty committee. National Security Advisor Muwaffaq Rubaie interjected that an MNF-I officer was already engaged with the committee. Maliki agreed with this arrangement. Ambassador wrapped up the meeting by reminding Maliki that he had congratulated him November 12 on his amnesty plans as a "bold initiative" (reftel) and that an amnesty that was as broad as possible would be a key to reconciliation.
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